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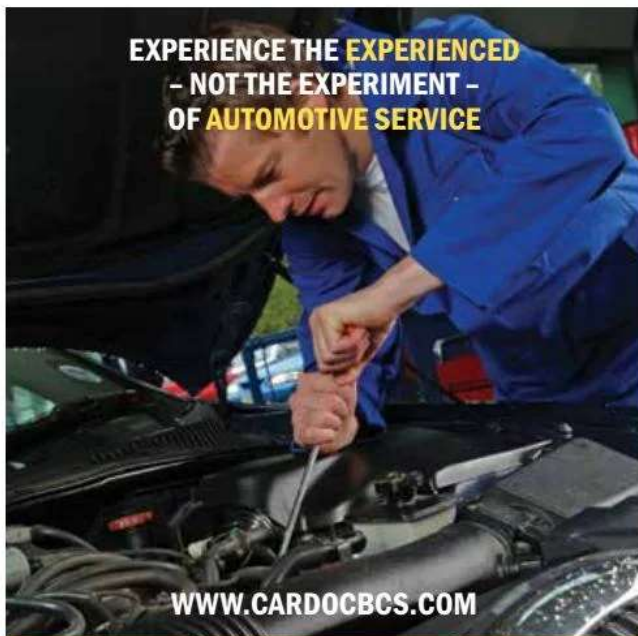
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# Howdy Ags!

I purposely waited until the last minute to write my publisher's note as things are everchanging. But at this moment, Aggie football is supposed to kickoff on September 26th at Kyle Field. The plan is to have 25% of the normal stadium operating capacity, and we are scheduled to play a ten game, conference-only schedule. The students arrived on campus and started classes this week, and we have all been asking them to help us have fall sports by wearing masks, washing their hands, and keeping social distancing guidelines.

Aggie football has had two days of practice, and spirits are high as we move towards the season we all hope happens. Coach Fisher addressed the media via a Zoom call about the first day of practice. "You don't know how happy I am to see ya'll!" he joked "You never thought you'd hear the coach say that, I'm happy to see the media! What's the biggest thing you take away from practice, it was practice!" After so many months of isolation and a delayed beginning to fall camp, he said it was a joy to get back to work.

We are definitely in a wait-and-see status as the students are back across the country, and we're waiting to see if the curve we tried so hard to flatten will spike back up and cost us this season.

The Big Ten and PAC-12 Conferences have already postponed their fall sports, and if it weren't for the ACC and Big 12 joining the SEC, the 2020 football season would be done. We are hopeful that we will have football this fall because our staffs and student athletes have worked hard to make that happen.

We all know the financial impact that football has across the board in order to fund all of our different sports. Our soccer and volleyball teams are still preparing to play even though the NCAA announced the championships for those sports have been cancelled. We will see what happens as they are still, as of today, planning to play matches in September.

It has been a crazy time! Inside this issue we preview our football team as well as the ten conference opponents they are scheduled to play this fall. We check in with Coach G from Aggie Soccer and Coach Bird from Aggie Volleyball! We hope you enjoy this issue and that you stay healthy!

God Bless & Gig'em!

*Rob '88*



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# Aggieland

ILLUSTRATED

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snapshot

## ...masked attack

Freshman midfielder Kate Colvin takes on junior defender Macie Kolb on the first day of camp. Colvin comes to A&M from just up the road at Magnolia High School. The talented newcomer has been a member of the Houston Dash Developmental Academy since 2017. Coach G mentioned her in the opening day presser as a "super player" that should help the Aggies attack this season.

Photo by Craig Bisacre courtesy of Texas A&M Athletics





snapshot

## ...nailed it

Redshirt Freshman Madison Bowser rejects this offering from her middle blocker position. This talented product from Woodbridge, Virginia shows her athletic ability and great reach in this shot, taken the first day of fall camp. Bowser has been playing volleyball since she was six years old. She chose to come to A&M because she says "the coaches are amazing and everybody I met made me feel so welcomed on my visit." After redshirting last year, she is ready to make a big contribution this year.

Photo by Craig Bisacre courtesy of Texas A&M Athletics



snapshot

# HOME OF TH



# E 12TH MAN



## ...big reveal

After months of speculation, the Aggies finally revealed the new jerseys for the 2020 football season on Wednesday, August 12th. The new look was inspired by the traditional jerseys of the '80's and 90's with a modern twist, and the design was a creation that was two years in the making. "I have always been a fan of the more traditional look in uniforms, and more importantly, I believe our players like this look," Texas A&M Head Coach Jimbo Fisher said. Gone are the shoulder stripes and bevel-shaded numbers, replaced by clean and subtle numbers on the sleeves with a bolder appearance on the front and back of the jersey. Also returning is the Texas A&M wordmark across the chest that has resonated with the fan base for decades, still displayed in the A&M Pride font used since the 2012 season.

Photo by Craig Bisacre courtesy of Texas A&M Athletics



**[SOCCER]** The Aggies are hungry to take the field in 2020. After the long layoff due to the coronavirus, Coach G is anxious to see what this talented group can do this fall and what championships, if any, they will be competing to win. The team is led by four talented seniors: Taylor Ziemer, Jimena Lopez, Addie McCain and Rheagen Smith. Kendall Bates returns from an ACL injury that sidelined her last season and the Aggies return plenty of experienced players like Katie Smith, Tera Ziemer, Macie Kolb, Karlina Sample, Ali Russell and Daria Britton. In goal, the Aggies have three players that will be competing for playing time: Jordan Burbank, Shantel Hutton and Kenna Caldwell. New arrivals to the program include Kate Colvin, Westyn Henderson, Andersen Williams, Taylor Pounds, Natalie Yoo, Barbara Olivieri, Laney Carroll, Lauren Geczik, Sawyer Dumond and Jai Smith.





**[VOLLEYBALL]** Coach Bird says her squad of self proclaimed “gym rats” are excited to get back together and to play for the love of the game. The team is led by seniors Camille Conner and Morgan Davis. The Aggies have a young corps of talented players, but they also return a group of juniors that gained valuable experience last season including Mallory Talbert, Allison Fields, London Austin-Roark and Taylor Voss. Returning for their sophomore campaign and ready to contribute are Karly Basham, Lauren Davis, Morgan Christon, Treyaunna Rush, Sabrina Sustala and Ciera Hecht. Joining the Aggies as freshmen are Erica Lowery, Hanna Larson, Melissa Walden, Madison Bowser and Claire Jeter. The Aggies also added two transfers last spring that are eligible to compete this fall, Morgan Christon and Camryn Ennis.



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scoreboard



# ATM

## 2020 FOOTBALL PREVIEW

BY: ROB HAVENS '88



The Aggies enter the 2020 season with high expectations. Coming off a brutal schedule in 2019 that had the Aggies play three teams ranked number one in the nation, the Ags return a veteran squad that is ready to compete for championships. Jimbo Fisher has laid the foundation for this program and recruited some of the best classes in A&M history, and now in year three it is time to take this team to the next level.

The Aggies finished up their 2019 campaign with a great come-from-behind victory over Oklahoma State in the Texas Bowl. The win gave the team an 8-5 record with a 4-4 mark in the SEC, which placed the Ags 4th in the SEC West Division. They played one of the toughest schedules in the country, including away games versus the two schools that battled in the National Title Game.

Now the program turns the page and hopes that lessons learned from last year and another year of experience along with a talented crop of new and talented recruits will mean good things for the Aggies in 2020.

Quarterback Kellen Mond enters his senior campaign as the most experienced signal caller in the SEC. He threw for 2,897 yards last season with 20 touchdowns and nine interceptions.

He will be pushed in fall camp by gun-slinger Zach Calzada, who played in limited action last season and retained his freshman year of eligibility by not participating in more than three games. The Aggies also added newcomer Haynes King out of Longview High School who was ranked by ESPN as the No. 3 dual-threat quarterback in the country. Coach Fisher has assembled quite the stable of elite quarterbacks who will all be fighting for playing time.

Texas A&M may have a three headed monster in the backfield as Isaiah Spiller, Ainias Smith and incoming freshman Devon Achane will all look to contribute to the Aggies' running game. Spiller rushed for almost a 1,000 yards in his freshman year after replacing Jashaun Corbin, who suffered a season ending injury against Clemson. Spiller carried the load for the team last year and became one of the most dependable weapons in Jimbo Fisher's arsenal.

Ainias Smith spent most of his season as a wide receiver before being forced into the backfield out of necessity. The positive results in the bowl practices and the game versus Okie State led to a permanent change for the playmaking talent. Not only will Fisher depend on him to boost the running game, but his ability

### 2020 SCHEDULE

SEPT. 26	VS. VANDERBILT	NOV. 7	@ SOUTH CAROLINA
OCT. 3	@ ALABAMA	NOV. 14	@ TENNESSEE
OCT. 10	VS. FLORIDA	NOV. 21	VS. OLE MISS
OCT. 17	@ MISSISSIPPI STATE	NOV. 28	VS. LSU
OCT. 31	VS. ARKANSAS	DEC. 5	@ AUBURN

### 2019 RECORD

OVERALL	8 - 5
CONFERENCE	4 - 4
HOME	5 - 2
AWAY	1 - 3
NEUTRAL	2 - 0

to make explosive plays on punt and kick returns will be crucial this fall.

Meanwhile, the offense is excited for the addition of Devon Achane, who rushed for over 2,000 yards with 40 touchdowns in his senior year at Fort Bend Marshall. Achane gives the Aggies some more depth, providing them another playmaker in the backfield.

The Aggies have to replace two key pieces to their wide receiving corps with the departures of Quartney Davis and Kendrick Rogers. Leading pass catcher Jhamon Ausbon returns for his senior year and hopes to build on the solid season he had last year. Senior Camron Buckley is ready to step out of his backup role and make plays as a starting wide receiver for the Aggies. The 12th Man is excited to see one of the most coveted players to ever sign with A&M in Demond Demas. The true freshman is freakishly athletic at 6'3 with incredible leaping ability. He had to sit out his senior year and is hungry to display his talents at the next level. The Aggies also welcome Moose Muhammad III, who was the top wide receiving prospect out of North Carolina. Along with Devin Price (son of Coach Terry Price) who lit up the gridiron here in College Station playing for A&M Consolidated High School.

The tight end is a staple in the Jimbo Fisher offense. One of the biggest surprises of the 2019 season was Jalen Wydermyer, who had a break out year for the Aggies. He led all SEC tight ends with six touchdowns. The Aggies are also eager for the return of Baylor Cupp who suffered a leg injury and missed the entire 2019 season. The five star prospect is hungry to get back on the field and a double tight end set with these two teammates will be a tough cover for any defense. Max Wright makes the move from the defensive side of the ball and at 6'4, 265 with great athletic ability will give the Aggies more depth at the position.

Up front, the Aggies finally return an experienced offensive line. Four starters will pave the way as Carson Green, Kenyon Green, Jared Hocker and Dan Moore Jr. have all been battle tested against some of the best d-lines in the nation. Ryan McCollum also returns after an injury-plagued 2019. Fisher also added Chris Morris who was touted as the best prospect from the state of Arkansas and the fifth-best guard in the nation. Expectations are high for this group of talented returning players as

they are the most experienced position group on the team.

The loss of Braden Mann to the NFL leaves big shoes to fill in the kicking game, as he was the primary place kicker and punter for the Aggies. Junior place kicker Seth Small returns as the Aggies field goal kicker and Drew Reithman will compete against him for kickoff duties. Jimbo's answer in the punting game comes from down under as Nick Constantinou joined the Aggies last fall from Australia. He had one punt versus UTSA that went for 57-yards.

As we take a look at the other side of the ball there is a lot of excitement in the defensive backs group. The Ags return four starters, a slew of lettermen and some extreme talent in the new recruits that are ready to play. Starters Elijah Blades, Myles Jones, Leon O'Neal Jr. and Demani Richardson anchor the back end of Mike Elko's defense. Richardson earned a spot on the All SEC Freshman Team last year with 71 tackles as a freshman. Keldrick Carper was fourth on the team with 51 tackles and served as one of the team's four captains. The Aggies signed four defensive backs to the 2020 class in Antonio Johnson Jr., Jaylon Jones, Josh Moten and Brian George. Expect these guys to make an immediate impact, as they are too good to not be on the field.

The Aggies return an experienced duo at linebacker, as big Buddy Johnson and Anthony Hines III lead the Aggie defense in the middle. Johnson led the defense in tackles last year as a first year starter with 77 tackles. Hines returned from an injury lost season in 2018 and had 73 tackles of his own, good for second on the team. Aaron Hansford moved to the defensive side of the ball and had a solid year for the Aggies. The team added two

linebackers to the 2020 class, Edgerrin Cooper and Antonio Doyle, Jr. Both are four-star prospects and will do their best to contribute early in their Aggie careers.

Once again the defensive line is one of the most talented position groups on the team. When Justin Madubuike decided to leave the team early to protect his draft status (drafted in the third round of the 2020 NFL Draft), it opened the door for other players to step up and display their skills. The Aggies return three starters from last year's d-line Bobby Brown III, Michael Clemons and Tyree Johnson. They also get back Jayden Peevy and DeMarvin Leal, who were huge contributors last year. Fisher added six recruits to this position group Fadil Diggs, Donell Harris, Jr., McKinnley Jackson, Braedon Mowry, Isaiah Raikes and Dallas Walker IV. The defensive line has been an important key in Jimbo's success over the years. Diggs was named the Gatorade Player of the Year out of New Jersey. Raikes had 53 tackles in his senior year and also comes to Aggieland from New Jersey.

Jimbo Fisher and his staff have worked hard to assemble the kind of top caliber athletes it takes to compete for championships in this league. Fisher said last year that this team was just inches away from being where they need to be. The coaching staff has worked hard to develop that talent and install Coach Fisher's offense over the last two seasons. Now it's time to take that next step and make this program feared as the opponent sees us run out on the field. The potential is there, we just have to step up and make it happen. Let's hope we look back on 2020 as the year that everything changed and the Aggies played for a championship. ■



ROB HAVENS '88

01

## VANDERBILT



The Commodores are coming off a tough season in which they went 3-9 overall and only won one SEC game. It was the worst showing since Coach Mason's first year in Nashville, so the head man cleaned house in the off season and brought in six new assistants. Todd Fitch is the new offensive coordinator, and Ted Roof takes over the defensive play calling. Fitch is a 35-year coaching veteran and comes to Vandy after a successful stint at Louisiana Tech. Roof has deep roots in the SEC, having played at Georgia and then coached at Alabama and Auburn. He is known for an aggressive style of defense. The quarterback race in fall camp will be between Ken Seals from the state of Texas and transfer Jeremy Moussa. Fitch will call a more up-tempo game and try to spread out their opponents. The Dores will rely on Jamauri Wakefield as their highest producing running back. Cam Johnson should be the prime target at wide out after starting nine games last year and catching 30 passes. The strength of the team lies in their defensive line, beginning with Senior Dayo Odeyingbo who has started 21 games in the last two seasons at defensive end. Drew Birchmeier and Cameron Tidd will anchor the inside. Dimitri Moore returns as the teams leading tackler with 99 at the inside linebacker position.



VANDERBILT ATHLETICS

## 2020 SCHEDULE

9.26	@ TEXAS A&M	11.7	@ MISSISSIPPI STATE
10.3	VS. LSU	11.14	@ KENTUCKY
10.10	VS. SOUTH CAROLINA	11.21	VS. FLORIDA
10.17	@ MISSOURI	11.28	VS. TENNESSEE
10.31	VS. OLE MISS	12.5	@ GEORGIA

## 2019 RECORD

OVERALL	3 - 9
CONFERENCE	1 - 7
HOME	3 - 4
AWAY	0 - 5
NEUTRAL	0 - 0

02

## ALABAMA



For the first time since the inception of the CFP system, the Tide were not invited to participate last season. That should give them plenty of motivation this fall. Once again Alabama is loaded with the best talent in the country, and Nick Saban is ready to prove they are still one of the four best teams in the nation. The Tua distraction is gone and Mac Jones returns with some valuable experience from last season. Running back Najee Harris returns for his senior year and has the potential to make a run at the Heisman Trophy. He will be running behind an offensive line that returns four of last year's five starters. At wide out, leading receivers DeVonta Smith and Jaylen Waddle will again create problems for every defensive back corps that they will face. LaBryan Ray and DJ Dale missed games due to injuries last year, and if they come back healthy, they will make an immediate impact for Alabama's defensive line. Dylan Moses returns after missing the entire season due to injury and will lead a deep and talented group of linebackers. The secondary group is young but talented and will need to grow up fast as they face more spread offenses joining the league via Kiffin and Leach. Repeating as a national champ can be difficult as some teams lack the hunger it takes to get back. But Alabama should be plenty hungry to get back to the top of college football, which could be unfortunate for all the teams they play.



ALABAMA ATHLETICS PHOTOGRAPHY

## 2020 SCHEDULE

9.26	@ MISSOURI	10.31	VS. MISSISSIPPI STATE
10.3	VS. TEXAS A&M	11.14	@ LSU
10.10	@ OLE MISS	11.21	VS. KENTUCKY
10.17	VS. GEORGIA	11.28	VS. AUBURN
10.24	@ TENNESSEE	12.5	@ ARKANSAS

## 2019 RECORD

OVERALL	11 - 2
CONFERENCE	6 - 2
HOME	6 - 1
AWAY	3 - 1
NEUTRAL	2 - 0

03

## FLORIDA



On August 7th, the SEC announced the two eastern conference teams that the Aggies would play this year, and the first addition to our schedule was a home date with the Florida Gators. Head Coach Dan Mullen has the Gators knocking at the door of the College Football Playoffs. He has a veteran quarterback in Kyle Trask that's coming off a successful season. The Gators also have two big weapons at wide receiver in Trevon Grimes and Kadarius Toney, and an All-SEC tight end in Kyle Pitts. Defensive Coordinator Todd Grantham has a few holes to fill and should be helped by the addition of Georgia transfer Brenton Cox Jr. at linebacker. Kaiir Elam returns for his sophomore campaign at cornerback after a breakout year last season. The Aggies had one of their best wins in program history when they travelled to The Swamp in 2017. The special teams were a huge factor in that victory as the Aggies kicked four field goals to beat Florida 19-17. A&M will roll out a new kicker this season while the Gators Evan McPherson has missed only 4 field goal attempts in the last two years. This game should be a lot of fun, and if the Aggies can win, it could propel them to a final four finish.



FLORIDA ATHLETICS

## 2020 SCHEDULE

9.26	@ OLE MISS	11.7	VS. GEORGIA
10.3	VS. SOUTH CAROLINA	11.14	VS. ARKANSAS
10.10	@ TEXAS A&M	11.21	@ VANDERBILT
10.17	VS. LSU	11.28	VS. KENTUCKY
10.24	VS. MISSOURI	12.5	@ TENNESSEE

## 2019 RECORD

OVERALL	11 - 2
CONFERENCE	6 - 2
HOME	6 - 0
AWAY	3 - 1
NEUTRAL	2 - 1

04

## MISS. STATE



After two years of trying to run his offense with players recruited to run a different offense, Joe Moorhead was shown the door in Starkville. The Bulldogs made a splash hire by snagging away Mike Leach from Washington State. If nothing else the press conferences before and after their games just got a lot more interesting. Leach has always been a tough coach to prepare for in one week's time, and Mike Elko's staff will have their hands full when we take on the Dogs this fall. The key to Leach's success each game comes down to the quarterback. If you can stop or rattle him, there is a good chance you will win. Leach went out and got Stanford graduate transfer K.J. Costello. He missed half the season last year due to injury, but he comes to Mississippi with over 6,000 passing yards and 49 touchdowns through the air. On the ground, the Dogs bring back Kylin Hill, who led the SEC in rushing last year during the regular season. During his time as a coach, Leach has always had the shootout mentality, and defense has been an afterthought. His new defensive coordinator Zach Arnett runs a 3-3-5 defense and comes to Starkville from San Diego State. It will be interesting to see how his defense works out against the powerful offenses of the SEC.



ROB HAVENS '88

## 2020 SCHEDULE

9.26	@ LSU	11.7	VS. VANDERBILT
10.3	VS. ARKANSAS	11.14	VS. AUBURN
10.10	@ KENTUCKY	11.21	@ GEORGIA
10.17	VS. TEXAS A&M	11.28	@ OLE MISS
10.31	@ ALABAMA	12.5	VS. MISSOURI

## 2019 RECORD

OVERALL	6 - 7
CONFERENCE	3 - 5
HOME	4 - 3
AWAY	2 - 3
NEUTRAL	0 - 1

# 05 ARKANSAS



No matter how bad the Hogs have been against the rest of their schedule, they always seem to give the Aggies fits when we play them. The Aggies have beaten Arkansas the last eight times, but once again, last year's 31-27 win came down to the last series. The Razorbacks fired head coach Chad Morris last year in season and replaced him with long time offensive line assistant coach Sam Pittman. Pittman inherits a program that has lost 19 consecutive conference games. He has never been a head coach at this level and will enter this season with the disadvantage of having no practice time with his team, after spring camp was cancelled due to the Coronavirus. The Hogs used five different quarterbacks last year, including our own Nick Starkel. On the bright side, Arkansas was able to snag former Florida Gator Feleipe Franks during the off-season. The 6'6 235 pound grad transfer started 25 games for Florida and is a God-send for this program. Former Aggie running back Rakeem Boyd piled up over 1,100 yards rushing and hopes to continue that success under the new offense that has been taken over by Kendal Briles, who is the son of former Baylor Head Coach Art Briles. Arkansas had a very young team last year, it will be interesting to see how quickly Pittman can turn things around with only fall camp to install his new system. If history has proven anything, they will still show up when they come to play us!



ARKANSAS ATHLETICS

2020 SCHEDULE	9.26	VS. GEORGIA	11.7	VS. TENNESSEE
	10.3	@ MISSISSIPPI STATE	11.14	@ FLORIDA
	10.10	@ AUBURN	11.21	VS. LSU
	10.17	VS. OLE MISS	11.28	@ MISSOURI
	10.31	@ TEXAS A&M	12.5	VS. ALABAMA

2019 RECORD	OVERALL	2 - 10
	CONFERENCE	0 - 8
	HOME	2 - 5
	AWAY	0 - 4
	NEUTRAL	0 - 1

# 06 S. CAROLINA



The Aggies dominated the Gamecocks last year, shutting their offense down and allowing only six points. Most experts expected Will Muschamp to be replaced after a 4-8 record in his fifth season with the program, but a large buyout might have saved his job for another season. South Carolina returns a young team, and Muschamp needed someone to jump-start his offense. He hired Mike Bobo, who spent 20 years in the SEC grooming and developing quarterbacks before spending the last five years as the head coach of Colorado State. Bobo is tasked with developing sophomore quarterback Ryan Hilinski, who struggled last year with health issues but still managed to complete 58% of his passes for over 2300 yards. The Cocks lost all three of their running backs from last year, but they added MarShawn Lloyd out of Maryland who will be expected to contribute right away. Once again, USC will rely on its defense to win games. Middle linebacker Ernest Jones led the team with 97 tackles last year. They also have a pair of veteran corners in Jaycee Horn and Israel Mukuamu that will need to have big seasons if the Cocks want to turn things around.



ROB HAVENS '88

2020 SCHEDULE	9.26	VS. TENNESSEE	11.7	VS. TEXAS A&M
	10.3	@ FLORIDA	11.14	@ OLE MISS
	10.10	@ VANDERBILT	11.21	VS. MISSOURI
	10.17	VS. AUBURN	11.28	VS. GEORGIA
	10.24	@ LSU	12.5	@ KENTUCKY

2019 RECORD	OVERALL	4 - 8
	CONFERENCE	3 - 5
	HOME	3 - 4
	AWAY	1 - 3
	NEUTRAL	0 - 1

# 07 TENNESSEE



The last time the Vols came to College Station was one of the most exciting wins in program history, as the Aggies beat Tennessee in double overtime 45-38. This season the Aggies added a trip to Knoxville late in the summer, and the schedule that we were excited about last year just got a lot tougher. UT stumbled out of the blocks last season with a big upset to Georgia State, but new head coach Jeremy Pruitt righted the ship and the Vols ended the season on a six-game winning streak. Jarrett Guarantano returns under center for his senior year. He has a veteran offensive line that could be the strength of this year's team. In the backfield UT has two proven running backs in Eric Gray and Ty Chandler. The team has holes to fill at wide receiver and will look to Josh Palmer and transfer Deangelo Gibbs for production. The defense got stronger as the season went on last season, and they'll lean heavily on Henry To'o To'o at inside linebacker to lead the Volunteer defense this fall. The defensive line brings back their entire rotation this season, and they've done well so far, holding opposing offenses to less than 100 yards in four of their last six games. It will be the first time the Aggies have travelled to Knoxville for a football game.



TENNESSEE ATHLETICS / VOL PHOTOS

2020 SCHEDULE	9.26	@ SOUTH CAROLINA	11.7	@ ARKANSAS
	10.3	VS. MISSOURI	11.14	<b>VS. TEXAS A&amp;M</b>
	10.10	@ GEORGIA	11.21	@ AUBURN
	10.17	VS. KENTUCKY	11.28	@ VANDERBILT
	10.24	VS. ALABAMA	12.5	VS. FLORIDA

2019 RECORD	OVERALL	8 - 5
	CONFERENCE	5 - 3
	HOME	5 - 3
	AWAY	2 - 2
	NEUTRAL	1 - 0

# 08 OLE MISS



The coaching carousel continued in Oxford as a 4-8 campaign was not enough to give Matt Luke another year at the helm. The Rebels got a big splash hire with the addition of Head Coach Lane Kiffin. He brings a coaching pedigree that stretches across the country from California, with USC and the NFL Oakland Raiders, to Tennessee, Alabama and Florida. He arrives in Mississippi after two 10 plus win seasons at FAU. Jeff Lebby joins Kiffin staff with the title of offensive coordinator. Chris Partridge and D.J. Durkin will be co-defensive coordinators. John Rhys Plumlee returns as last year's starting quarterback where he led the league in rushing. Jerrion Ealy rushed for almost 900 yards last year and produced eight touchdowns for the Rebels. He will again be in the backfield behind four guys that started on the offensive line last season. Kiffin is sure to open the receiving game and has Junior Elijah Moore that scored six touchdowns last season with 67 catches. Last year the Rebels struggled on defense, allowing almost 27 points a game, good for the fourth worst in the conference. The Aggies needed a scoop and score from Buddy Johnson last year in Oxford to beat Ole Miss. Let's hope the Aggies can take advantage of them installing a new defense this season and hang a loss on a team that we outclass in terms of talent.



OLE MISS ATHLETICS

2020 SCHEDULE	9.26	VS. FLORIDA	10.31	@ VANDERBILT
	10.3	@ KENTUCKY	11.14	VS. SOUTH CAROLINA
	10.10	VS. ALABAMA	11.21	<b>@ TEXAS A&amp;M</b>
	10.17	@ ARKANSAS	11.28	VS. MISSISSIPPI STATE
	10.24	VS. AUBURN	12.5	@ LSU

2019 RECORD	OVERALL	4 - 8
	CONFERENCE	2 - 6
	HOME	4 - 3
	AWAY	0 - 5
	NEUTRAL	0 - 0

09

LSU

LSU®

All the stars aligned for the Tigers last year. With a QB who completed 76% of his passes, they ran the table and won the national championship. Now it's time to turn the page, and this is not the same group that won a natty last year as they return only 8 of 22 starters from last year's team. The Tigers will have to reload after the bulk of their playmakers are now in the NFL. Junior Myles Brennan will replace Burrow under center, and it's easy to say he has big shoes to fill after the Heisman Trophy winning, number one overall NFL draft pick is now back in Ohio playing for the Bengals. LSU will also have to replace their number one tailback Clyde Edwards-Helaire, who was also taken in the first round of the NFL Draft by the defending world champs, the Kansas City Chiefs. Sophomore Chris Curry is expected to fill his big shoes. The Tigers do return their top receiver from last year in Ja'Marr Chase, who caught 84 passes for 1,780 yards and 20 touchdowns. LSU returns only one starter on the offensive line. Not only did the Tigers lose some of their best players to the NFL they also lost passing game coordinator Joe Brady and Dave Aranda, the high dollar defensive coordinator that took the main job at Baylor. Orgeron replaced Aranda with Bo Pelini as the new DC, and Scott Linehan for Brady. The defense will move from a 3-4 to a 4-3, and Pelini will have several holes to fill from last year's defense, which only returns four starters.



ROB HAVENS '88

## 2020 SCHEDULE

9.26	VS. MISSISSIPPI STATE	10.31	@ AUBURN
10.3	@ VANDERBILT	11.14	VS. ALABAMA
10.10	VS. MISSOURI	11.21	@ ARKANSAS
10.17	@ FLORIDA	11.28	@ TEXAS A&M
10.24	VS. SOUTH CAROLINA	12.5	VS. OLE MISS

## 2019 RECORD

OVERALL	15 - 0
CONFERENCE	8 - 0
HOME	7 - 0
AWAY	5 - 0
NEUTRAL	3 - 0

10

AUBURN



Since the Aggies joined the SEC, the visiting team has won almost every game in this series. Bo Nix stepped up last year and helped his team jump out to a big lead against the Aggies and then made the plays at the end to seal the victory. He struggled against Florida and LSU, but Gus Malzahn has lots of confidence in the sophomore QB. The Aggies will have to watch out for the trick plays that cost them last year and control the line of scrimmage. On the bright side, the Tigers lost their five primary starters on the offensive line, which could give the Ags the advantage. They also lost starting tailback Ja'Tarvious Whitlow, who entered the transfer portal during the off-season. Seth Williams and Anthony Schwartz return as two of the best receivers in the conference, and they both should blossom under the tutelage of new offensive coordinator Chad Morris. The Tigers also have huge holes to fill on the defensive line, as Derrick Brown and Marlon Davidson have moved on to the NFL. Big Kat Bryant and Tyrone Truesdale will be looked on to fill those holes, but they've got their work cut out for them. In the middle of the Tiger defense is first team All-SEC linebacker K.J. Britt who had 69 tackles last year.



ROB HAVENS '88

## 2020 SCHEDULE

9.26	VS. KENTUCKY	10.31	VS. LSU
10.3	@ GEORGIA	11.14	@ MISSISSIPPI STATE
10.10	VS. ARKANSAS	11.21	VS. TENNESSEE
10.17	@ SOUTH CAROLINA	11.28	@ ALABAMA
10.24	@ OLE MISS	12.5	VS. TEXAS A&M

## 2019 RECORD

OVERALL	9 - 4
CONFERENCE	5 - 3
HOME	6 - 1
AWAY	2 - 2
NEUTRAL	1 - 1



## Q&A WITH COACH G

THE HEAD SOCCER COACH UPDATES US ON HIS TEAM ENTERING THE NEW SEASON



**Q: THE NCAA ANNOUNCED TODAY THAT THEY ARE GOING TO DELAY THE DECISION ON THE CHAMPIONSHIPS UNTIL LATER IN THE MONTH OF AUGUST. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR Y'ALL? HOW WEIRD IS IT TO BE STARTING PRACTICES NOT KNOWING HOW THE SEASON IS GOING TO PLAY OUT IN THE END?**

**A:** Well, I'll give you the G-Rated version of what I think. It's disappointing that the NCAA isn't showing more leadership for these kids. It's hard on these young student athletes. They are all goal oriented. They are motivated to succeed at the highest levels. The goal posts sometimes are moving, and sometimes they aren't even there. Just to allow these people to know what we're going for and how things are going to be. I know it has been frustrating for our student athletes and it's been frustrating for me too.

**Q: HOW DO YOU AS A COACH TRY TO SET A COMMON GOAL TO KEEP THEM FOCUSED WHEN THERE IS SO MUCH UNCERTAINTY? IT'S BEEN THE CONVERSATION FOR SEVERAL MONTHS NOW WITH ALL OF THE MOVING GOAL POSTS.**

**A:** Well the good news is we are training. Today we were on the field! Yesterday was our first day and we were able to get out, so if we didn't have the masks on, you'd see that we all had smiles on our faces. With the masks on we are all huffing and puffing for air to try and stay alive. With everything that is going on, at least we got a start. So for us, we carry on. Our first game is still going to be on the fourth of September at Oklahoma State. Our first SEC game is going to be against Tennessee on September 18, and until somebody tells us that it is different, then that is where our focus is. We have one month to prepare, that's 14 days longer than we usually get to prepare. For a control freak like myself, it's a chance for us to not only get ourselves into a good training rhythm but too also to take care of a lot of fine tuning and everything else. Today was the first day on the field so it was our baseline, today and yesterday.



**Q: COACH, WHAT IS THE TRADEOFF FOR THOSE EXTRA TWO WEEKS OF PRACTICE VS HAVING NON-CONFERENCE GAMES? WOULD YOU PREFER IT ONE WAY OR ANOTHER OR WITH EVERYONE IN THE SAME SITUATION WILL IT NOT MATTER IN THE LONG RUN?**

**A:** Well, I'd like to have my cake and eat it too. I'd like to have my 20 games back instead of now down to 14 games. I'm hoping we don't go less than that because I want this to be a meaningful season for our seniors, especially. I don't want all of the sudden some bureaucrats have said our season can only be half as long as it usually is because of things that are not for sure. We are going to do everything we can to keep our kids safe. And we are going to do everything we can to put this team in a championship mode. We just need to concentrate on what we are doing today and hope that the people that are representing us are doing the right thing. I know that Ross Bjork is doing everything he can to represent Texas A&M and represent our student athletes and our university in the best method possible. Which means we are going to put Texas A&M first in our thoughts. I just wish the NCAA would make up their mind, and would be bold and just say we are going to do X, Y or Z so that we could then focus on what exactly that is. Right now, it's just a matter of trying to be the best we can every single day which is kind of a common thing with the players that come to this program.

**Q: OTHER THAN MASKS, IS THE WAY YOU RUN PRACTICE DIFFERENTLY WITH COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS?**

**A:** Well, Covid precautions, yeah it's crazy. So we don't get to

use the locker room. The girls don't get to hang out at all. So a lot of the things that we need to be doing to build teams, all the protocols are for not building teams, they are for building individuals and spaces. Which is completely understandable, but we are a team sport and so when we are in training. When we cross the line and step onto the field, what can we do that is still safe? We're fostering an educational environment, one that the girls can learn from each other and how they can become a better team. All of those, and obviously again we did testing this morning, That is something that Texas A&M is doing a great job of. The issues of what we can do and what we can't do when we are on the field around the players is a little bit different.

The other benefit is we only have to train once a day. Typically, we would have been training twice one day and once the next and then twice and then once, then twice and once, and then kind of rotate through there. That can be a real grind on the players so the fact that this has been stretched out, I see as a real benefit because the kids get a full 21 hours to recover from a hard training session.

**Q: CAN YOU TALK ABOUT YOUR RETURNING PLAYERS AND THE NEW GUYS THAT WILL BE COMING IN?**

**A:** There are a lot of new players, which is exciting. A couple of players that you guys will see and hear a lot about, Barb Oliveri, is a really, really special player. She's an attacking player. She was a high school All-American. She was the Texas State High School Gatorade Player of the Year and is someone who has played in international competitions for Venezuela.

She's from Katy Texas but her parents come from Venezuela. Kate Colvin, who's played with the Dash, in Houston has trained with the professional group down there in the past, is a super player and a really good teammate in how she plays. Laney Carroll, who comes out of Southern California, is a terrific attacking player. She has scored some speed marks that have really pleasantly surprised us, she is really fast. Then of course, you have a lot of our key players coming back. You've got Addie McCain coming back. You have Jimena Lopez coming back. You have Macie Kolb coming back. So we will have a different shape to the way we play because we will adjust it to these new players to the strength that we have returning, but it will still be a Texas A&M team that hopefully strikes fear into our opponents.

**Q: YOU HAVE HAD SOME SUCCESS RECRUITING SISTERS INTO THIS PROGRAM. YOU HAVE HALEY POUNDS' SISTER TAYLOR, KENDALL BATES, AND THE ZIEMER SISTERS. TALK ABOUT RECRUITING SISTERS INTO THE PROGRAM.**

**A:** Well, it's a nice thing when you have sisters that get along, because we all know stories of sisters that don't get along. We are really blessed to have these girls here. The Ziemer sisters are super. They bring a California flair and personalities to the team and obviously love each other dearly and that's obvious. The Bates sisters were the same way. When Emily was here... It's interesting to see the differences in people who were raised in the same home. You have that base of great character but different personality, slight tweaks here and there. Kendall Bates is as good of person as good a human being as you'll ever be around and we are lucky to have her in this program. She has come back from two ACL surgeries and is really doing great. She has had a great recovery. All this time off to do stuff on her own, she's been doing stuff that no one has been able to do while no one else was watching. So I'm really excited for her. And then the Pounds are another great family. You know Blake and his kids. It's funny how when you have good parents — and Blake and Dawn Pounds are really, really good people — it's just such a coincidence that great kids tend to

come out of those environments. That's what you have with Taylor Pounds. She's very different than Haley, but man she's just an awesome person. Yesterday in our fitness test she absolutely blew it away. That was a great thing to see from a freshman coming in and doing as well as she did. It's neat that there are legacies and families that what you do you come to Texas A&M and play with your sister. I hope that we get to do that a lot. I think we've had 8 pairs of sisters over the time that I've been here. It's always a cool thing to be a part of.

**Q: WITH THE COMBINATION OF RETURNERS AND NEW KIDS WILL THERE BE CHANGES IN FORMATIONS OR WILL IT BE THE SAME AS LAST YEAR?**

**A:** Well, I don't get that Biblical but, "Know thy self!" is something that I think is very important that you have to know what you can do and know what you can't do. A big part of what our preparation — especially this first week or first two weeks — is going to be learning our players, learning what we do well and what we need to polish up on and what we need to avoid. So my coaches are exceptional at highlighting special powers that our players have, and Phil Stephenson, our Associate Head Coach, is a master at identifying talent but also developing talent within the program. I think that you'll see that. There will be people that pop up this year that you haven't seen in if you are a long time Texas A&M soccer fan, there are people that your going to go "Oh wow I didn't know she could do that! I didn't know that that was one of the tools she had in the shed." That's the thing that we are working on right now. We are not in a big hurry, so that's kind of the fun thing about it because we can go through our session without this ticking time bomb that a game is coming up in a week or three days. You know initially we were going to start on the 4th of August and we were going to have a game on the 7th of August, so that was going to be fast motion. Now we have completely altered away from that. We are going into trying to be thorough but keep it fun, because it's going to be four weeks of training. We don't want to burn anyone out.

**Q: IN REPLACING ALLI WATT, DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA OF WHO YOU WOULD BE SLIDING INTO THAT NUMBER 9 SLOT? IS IT BY COMMITTEE OR IS THAT UP FOR GRABS AS YOU WORK THROUGH, HEADED TO THE FALL?**

**A:** Well it's competition every day. Every day, anyone has an opportunity to grab any position through their performance. Today for example Reaghan Smith was outstanding. Reaghan is a senior and she has developed in her time here. So Reaghan would be one of those scary people to frighten our opponents because she's strong and she's tenacious in the way she plays. Laney Carroll is another kid that comes out of California who is also a very very talented player. I've talked about Barbara is also a great player there. Jai Smith, who's a transfer from Seaton Hall has a great change of pace and very tenacious and powerful on the ball. Whether we play, you know the thing about Texas A&M soccer is we've never been a system program. We've never been a program that just plays one thing. You just slip new pegs in those round holes. We basically look at who we have. We figure out what's the best way for us to get our best 11 players on the field, and how do we highlight that when we make substitutions during the game. And then that's how we formulate how we are going to play the game. It's not just here's the playbook and this is what we're going to do. Because we feel like you can waste talent that way and miss out on really, really special players that should be on the field. You just have to find a way to make it fit for them. ■



# GRATEFUL

## TO BE BACK TOGETHER

### AGGIE VOLLEYBALL PREPARING TO TAKE THE FLOOR

BY ROB HAVENS '88



If there is one thing that the last five months have shown us, it's how important sports are to our lives. When Texas A&M Volleyball Coach "Bird" Kuhn addressed the media for the first time via a Zoom Call after fall camp opened, there were two words she used to describe her excitement "#Worth It".

After everything that this team has gone through, after the stoppage of practices in the spring, from the isolation of shelter-in-place to the individual practices and zoom meetings to stay together — this team has experienced something no other team in program history has had to endure. Getting back together for their first workout made all of that stress and uncertainty go away, and the excitement of practicing together made it all worth it.

Bird explained that she knew she was an extrovert, but all of the time at home and being away from the team made it all too clear how much being with this team and interacting with them meant to her. Senior Camille Conner agreed, "It was so exciting to be back in the gym. We actually got to go back into Reed today and play a little bit. It's just so exciting to be back with the team and just be back with everybody."

COVID-19 protocols couldn't dampen their spirits as the girls wore masks during their workout and had designated areas to drink their bottled water. Conner shared with the media "(the masks) were a little different, super sweaty, but we want to be in the gym so we will do whatever it takes."

There is still a cloud of uncertainty as the NCAA has not made a decision if the end of the season championships will take place. But that uncertainty couldn't quash the enthusiasm

the team showed as the coaches met them on the floor. Bird explained, "We walked into the gym and they were all dancing. Not just a couple of them, like everyone!"

That is the energy and the atmosphere this team has created, and the coaches love to see it. "There is frustration (in not knowing what the NCAA will decide) but at the end of the day the goal is to be back together."

According to Bird the team hit the ground running. It was the first time since March that the whole team had been together, but the girls picked up right where they left off, showing a chemistry and camaraderie that you just can't fake.

This year's squad has only two seniors, and Camille Conner admitted it is a young group. The Aggies added two transfers after last season, and all but one of the incoming freshmen were here in the spring to see what is expected and how the program is run. Freshman Claire Jeter joined the club in July, and Bird said her transition to practice this morning was seamless.

Due to the delay of the upcoming season, Coach Kuhn says patience will be the key. With a team of self-described "Gym Rats," they want to work out all the kinks right away. But since the gym is not available at all times, they will have to focus on quality of practice instead of quantity. "Time is on our side to build them up training and practicing," Bird explained. "plus, they have plenty of recovery time so the training is optimal."

This team has had to overcome a lot of obstacles in the past year, but the Aggie coaching staff teaches them to persevere and be flexible both on and off the court. "You have to adapt and adjust, just like in a match. It's on the fly. It's like we are in a

match all the time.” Coach Bird said.

Coming off a season where the Aggies made it all the way to the Sweet Sixteen, this club is ready to compete for championships. But each year is a clean slate. Players will have to step up and fill holes left by graduating players. In her third year at A&M, Coach Bird believes that a balanced offense is their best weapon. She will rely on senior Camille Conner to lead this team. “She is like an appendage of our coaching staff,” Bird told us. According to her, Conner is light years ahead of where she was two years ago when the new staff took the reins.

Bird is confident they have all the pieces to win if they can all come together to make it happen. When asked how an empty Reed arena due to COVID 19 might affect this team, Bird reflected on a basketball game she had recently watched on TV. “I was watching a basketball game and I was thinking, you know what’s awesome about this? You’re going to see the love of the game more than anything. Because yes people are watching it on tv, but you’re not showing off. Like you’re playing with refs and coaches and your teammates. This is going to be like, you’re going to see people playing for each other and playing the game because they love the game.”

Based on what we have heard so far, it looks as if this team and this coaching staff have embraced this new normal. They have learned not to sweat the small stuff and enjoy being together as they work toward a common goal of getting better every day and preparing to win. These ladies will not take for granted the blessing they have been given to come together and play the sport they love for the school they love so well. ■



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# REC SPORTS

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## WOMEN'S SOCCER CLUB

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Soccer is arguably the most popular sport in the world. More than 270 million people play the sport regularly around the globe. Here in the United States, some girls start playing competitively when they are just five years old. The women's soccer club here at A&M is comprised of talented young ladies that played high school, and in some cases, college soccer before trying out and earning a spot on the club roster.

According to club president Madison Korb, "We have benefited from having a great variety of women join our team, bringing with them a conglomeration of styles of play and unique talents and abilities. It is our diversity joined together for a common purpose, along with our love for the game and each other, that make us such a great team." The Aggie team is not only respected regionally, but nationally as well, as the team consistently qualifies for the national tournament each year.

Korb tried out her freshman year not really knowing what to expect; she said she

was impressed by the quality of play and really liked the culture of the program and her teammates. She worked really hard and earned a starting position during her freshman year.

The soccer schedule usually begins during the first or second week of school. The team competes to qualify for the regional tournament, and then the top two teams from that tournament move on to nationals. Due to the increasing popularity of sport clubs, a second season with a regional and national tournament has been added in the spring.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the regular season has been postponed until the spring of 2021. Korb explained, "This fall will be devoted to fitness and skill development rather than contact, in-game play. We will be allowed to let potential new players come and train with us, but we are most likely going to have to delay official tryouts to the spring semester (or whenever we are permitted to have contact play).

For the past fifteen years, the Aggies have battled against their number one rival in the University of Texas. Both programs

are talented and typically compete for the league championship ahead of TCU and Baylor.

We asked Madison what her favorite experience has been since joining the team, and she told us, "My favorite experience with this team was the national tournament my freshman year. It was held in Gulf Shores, Alabama. Our team stayed in a very large house on the beach for the week, which just so happened to be the week before our final exams. We spent the time together bonding further as a team, playing amazing soccer, enjoying the beach, and diligently studying for exams. It was an incredible week and the perfect conclusion to an amazing semester."



## Rec Sports

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

## MEN'S SOCCER CLUB

BY ROB HAVENS '88

The Texas A&M Men's Soccer Club began in 1978, and in 1980 it became a non-scholarship varsity program until it was disbanded a year later due to NCAA Title IX restrictions. In '82 it became a club organization again and has continued to thrive over the past 38 years.

Today's club has two different teams, an A and B team, which combined have approximately 50-55 members. Graduation has taken its toll on the club, according to team president Patrick Wood. "As of this December, we lost ten very important players and friends due to graduation. So,



for now, we are basically starting from scratch."

Wood joined the team his sophomore year after taking a year off from competitive soccer. He explained, "I wanted to get back into playing the game that I love after taking my freshman year off from soccer. Also, having known a few of the players before trying out, I knew that the guys already in the club were a very nice, welcoming, and competitive group, which is something that I wanted to be a part of."

During the season, they practice as a team three times a week, and in the off-season, they practice twice a week. They normally have tryouts preceding their regular season in the fall, but due to COVID-19, their season has been bumped to the spring and they are using the fall to condition and lift weights on their own to prepare for next semester.

We asked Wood what his favorite experience has been since joining the team, and he told us, "For me, getting a win against UT for the first time was a great feeling. More recently, getting a tie at the national championships against the national champions BYU was also a great game that I won't forget. That was one of the only times anyone on the team has been happy with a draw, but stopping

BYU's three-year winning streak was a lot of fun. In our season opener last year against UTRGV, we had a last-minute goal to win the game; that was a great moment that started our season off on the right foot."

Competing in the sport he loves is a great experience, but the memories he has made with his teammates will be the ones he remembers for years to come. Wood said, "Some of the best times traveling with the team have simply been hanging out in the hotel with some of the guys. Random little moments like nervously going to eat hotel breakfast at 6:00 a.m. before playing against BYU or playing loud music in the rental car on the way to an away game are, to this day, vivid memories for me."

Patrick has enjoyed being president of the men's soccer club, and he explained his feelings to us: "This sounds cliché, but my favorite part about being on the team is being a part of a great group of guys who, every day, are putting maximum effort into getting better at what they love. This feeling is only amplified by being their president. My main role is to help facilitate the operations of the club and make the experience as positive as possible for our players. Being able to do that for some of my best friends is an honor as well as a lot of fun."

the12thman





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